

Amendments to the Claims

This Listing of the Claims replaces all prior versions and listings of claims in this application:

Listing of the Claims

Claim 1 (Previously Presented): A method of cleaning shoes in a vertical axis washing machine, said method comprising the steps of:

- (a) providing a washing machine having a vertical axis tub;
- (b) providing at least one shoe having a sole;
- (c) providing a device for orienting said at least one shoe in the tub of said washing machine, which maintains said at least one shoe in a particular orientation throughout the washing process;
- (d) positioning said device in the tub of said washing machine with said at least one shoe therein; and
- (e) operating said washing machine through a washing process.

Claim 2 (Previously Presented): The method of Claim 1 wherein said at least one shoe is placed in said device with said sole facing upward.

Claim 3 (Original): The method of Claim 2 wherein the washing machine operates through a spin cycle, and the washing machine has an agitator inside the tub, and the agitator rotates during the spin cycle of the washing machine, and said at least one shoe is oriented so that the toe of said at least one shoe is pointing in the same direction that the agitator rotates during the spin cycle of the washing machine.

Claim 4 (Original): The method of Claim 1 wherein the device for orienting said at least one shoe in the tub of the washing machine comprises a flexible bag having at least one pocket for maintaining said at least one shoe in a particular orientation.

Claim 5 (Original): The method of Claim 1 wherein the washing machine has an agitator, and the device for orienting said at least one shoe in the tub of the washing machine comprises a plurality of flexible mesh pockets that are at least indirectly joined together that fit around the washing machine agitator, and are held in place on the agitator.

Claim 6 (Previously presented): A device for orienting a shoe in the tub of a vertical axis washing machine, said device comprising a flexible bag, the flexible bag including a pocket holder for at least one shoe, adapted to maintain said at least one shoe in the washing machine with its sole facing upward.

Claim 7 (Cancelled).

Claim 8 (Currently amended): A flexible bag adapted to ~~for~~ maintaining shoes in a desired orientation in a washing machine, said flexible bag comprising:

at least one web of material that is arranged to have two opposed portions wherein said opposed portions are joined together to form several pockets, said pockets being defined by side walls, a closed bottom, and ends, and said pockets ~~provide~~ providing at least two openings adapted for inserting shoes; and

at least one component joined to the web and adapted to retain the pockets in a particular relationship and to release the pockets from the relationship.

Claim 9 (Currently Amended): The flexible bag of Claim 8 comprising an even number of pockets for shoes, wherein the bag is configured so that the pockets are adapted for arrangement on substantially opposite sides around a washing machine agitator.

Claim 10 (Original): The flexible bag of Claim 9 comprising four shoe pockets.

Claim 11 (cancelled).

Claim 12 (Currently Amended): The flexible bag of Claim ~~8~~ 11 which is configured so that the pockets are disposed at least partially around the washing machine agitator when said flexible bag is placed in a washing machine.

Claim 13 (Currently amended): The flexible bag of Claim ~~11~~ 8 wherein said at least one component comprises a snap fastening system.

Claim 14 (Original): The flexible bag of Claim 8 further comprising a stiffer portion thereof which stiffer portion assists in holding the shoes in a particular position within the pockets.

Claim 15 (Currently Amended): A flexible bag structure having at least two pockets adapted for holding shoes in a washing machine, wherein at least two of said pockets are joined to each other directly or indirectly and wherein each pocket includes a retaining means within the pocket for retaining a shoe in a desired orientation therein.

Claim 16 (Currently Amended): A method of cleaning shoes in a vertical axis washing machine, said method comprising the steps of:

- (a) providing a washing machine having a vertical axis tub;
- (b) providing at least one shoe having a sole;
- (c) providing a device for orienting said at least one shoe in the tub of said washing machine, which maintains said at least one shoe in a particular orientation throughout the washing process;
- (d) positioning said device in the tub of said washing machine
- (e) placing said at least one shoe in said device; and
- (f) operating said washing machine through a washing process,

wherein the device for orienting said at least one shoe is a flexible containment bag.

Claim 17 (Currently amended): The structure of Claim 15, wherein the retaining means comprises ~~each pocket includes a retainer comprising~~ at least one pleat in a wall of ~~the~~ each pocket ~~for retaining a shoe therein.~~

Claim 18 (Currently amended): The structure of Claim 15, wherein the retaining means comprises ~~each pocket includes a retainer comprising~~ an elastic band ~~at a pocket opening for retaining a shoe therein.~~

Claim 19 (New) The flexible bag as recited in claim 8 wherein the at least one component is adapted to retain the pockets in a substantially donut configuration around a washing machine agitator when the bag is placed in a washing machine.

Claim 20 (New) The flexible bag as recited in claim 8 wherein the at least one component is adapted to retain configuration of the bag so that the pockets substantially opposite one another around a washing machine agitator when the bag is placed in a washing machine.